

AGENDA ITEM VIII

PROPOSED SEAT-TIME POLICY FOR ACADEMIC CREDIT

STAFF ANALYSIS

In the past, the Board of Regents has utilized a very traditional standard of thirty-six hours of classtime per semester to equal three hours of academic credit. The basis of this policy, however, has changed significantly since approval of this standard. Now, given wide acceptance among state campuses for the use of a variety of distance learning technologies and the dramatic growth and availability of independent study programs, the present policy is deemed to be overly restrictive.

To remedy this potential problem, the Council of Chief Academic Officers charged its Electronic Learning Subcommittee with the responsibility to perform an extensive review of such policies nationwide and to solicit the input from all affected state campuses in the formation of a new policy. Once the Subcommittee had completed its initial draft, it was carefully reviewed by all campuses and refined further. A final draft was presented to the Council for its consideration in November, 2000. At its meeting of January 4, 2001, the Council unanimously approved the new Seat-Time Policy for Academic Credit (see Attachment). The Council now seeks final approval for this new policy from the Academic and Student Affairs Committee and the Board of Regents.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends approval.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

The staff recommends that the Academic and Student Affairs Committee grant approval for the proposed new Seat-Time Policy for Academic Credit. This new policy shall become effective immediately.

ATTACHMENT

**PROPOSED SEAT-TIME POLICY FOR ELECTRONICALLY
DELIVERED COURSEWORK**

PROPOSED SEAT-TIME POLICY FOR ELECTRONICALLY DELIVERED COURSEWORK

CURRENT BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

(Master Plan for Higher Education, Board of Regents, State of Louisiana, April 1994, p. 99)

Classes should meet for not less than 36 clock hours of instruction. This number of clock hours should be considered an absolute minimum. All class periods must be of reasonable length (1-4 hours). Chronologically, the course should be of such duration and with enough time between classes that students have adequate time to reflect, consider, evaluate, and absorb the ideas, concepts, and the values that constitute the course. Traditionally, in American higher education, the time/credit hours ration has been no less than one week per semester credit hour earned.

PROPOSED NEW BOARD OF REGENTS POLICY

State System institutions have long recognized that college-level learning may be acquired in a variety of settings and can be documented objectively and comprehensively through written or performance examinations and other academically sound procedures. A traditional example used to determine course length has been that three semester hour classes have met for not less than 36 clock hours of instruction. With the growth in recent years in distance education, the introduction of technology in delivering instruction, and the increase in the number of readings/special topic courses and independent study courses, the nature of contact hours has changed and requires greater flexibility. All classes must be of reasonable length and include both content and contact sufficient to maintain high academic quality and standards commensurate with credit hours awarded for a "traditional" three-semester hour lecture class. The basis for such certification of learning is a valid, credible assessment system which reliably determines whether a student possesses clearly identified, standards-based knowledge, skills, and abilities.